

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 103
By Womack

A RESOLUTION to honor and congratulate legendary basketball and football coach Lee Pate on his selection as a member of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

WHEREAS, each year the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association, after tough competition, names a select group of coaches, administrators, officials and contributors to receive the greatest honor a Tennessee athletic figure can receive, inclusion in the prestigious TSSAA Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, this year, the TSSAA decided to honor by inclusion in their Hall of Fame one of Tennessee's best coaches ever, Lee Pate, who, before his retirement, coached at Cleveland, Chattanooga Baylor, Bradley Central, Murfreesboro Central and Murfreesboro Oakland; and

WHEREAS, a native of Murfreesboro, Coach Pate is a distinguished graduate of Murfreesboro Central High School, where he played football; he also attended Morgan Prep, where he played post-graduate football; and

WHEREAS, he received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts degrees from Middle Tennessee State University and played collegiate football for the Blue Raiders; and

WHEREAS, Coach Pate served his country bravely as a United States Navy Communications Officer during World War II; and

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WHEREAS, after coaching for three years at MTSU, Coach Pate began his brilliant gridiron career at Bradley Central High School and later coached at Murfreesboro Central High School; and

WHEREAS, his excellent high school football record at Bradley Central and Murfreesboro Central was 155-91-10 and included seven bowl games; and

WHEREAS, his notable overall basketball record at Central and Oakland was 608 victories against just 170 losses. The 608 victories is the tenth highest number of victories of any boys, basketball coach in state history; and

WHEREAS, his winning percentage of .781 ranks number 1 in state history among inactive coaches with ten or more years of experience; and

WHEREAS, his 1965 basketball team won the state championship with an unblemished 32-0 record, and his 1963 team finished state runner-up; and

WHEREAS, his basketball teams appeared in 10 state tournaments, and won nine regional titles and 18 district championships; and

WHEREAS, he is married to the late Elizabeth Mims Pate and has two successful sons, Lee Samuel Pate, III and John Mims Pate; and

WHEREAS, Dickie Thomas, Murfreesboro Oakland coach and one of his former players, has said: "Coach Pate is probably the greatest person I've ever known. He has been a great, great influence on my life, and the longer I'm in education, the more I find out how wise he was. I don't think you'll find anyone who played for Coach, who accepted the discipline and work ethic that he required, and doesn't think they're a better person because of it."; and

WHEREAS, Dr. John Dixon, Murfreesboro pediatrician and one of his former players, has commented: "It's hard for me to imagine anyone more deserving of TSSAA Hall of Fame induction than Coach Pate. He knew sports, both football and basketball, but he knew how to coach young men and steer them to becoming better people than they otherwise would have become. He always wanted us to go by the rules, never taking shortcuts or doing anything that would reflect negatively on our school or families."; and

WHEREAS, R. Campbell Branson, former Lebanon coach and TSSAA Hall of Fame member, also paid tribute to Coach Pate by stating: "He was the best example I can think of what a high school coach should be. He knew how to win, and taught us that. His record is as good as anyone's . But more than that, he knew we should behave, and he would never accept us giving less than 100% in any aspect of our life. He probably affected more people positively than anyone I've ever known."; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we pause in our deliberations to specially recognize, honor and commend Coach Lee Pate; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we honor and congratulate Coach Lee Pate on his induction into the TSSAA Hall of Fame and commend him for the positive difference he has made in so many lives. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.